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REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In the Office Action, Claims 14-19 were rejected. In particular, Claim 14 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 2,311,145 to Widman ("Widman"). Claims 15-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Widman. Claim 18 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Widman in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,542,775 to Bechtoldt et al. ("Bechtoldt"). Claim 19 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite.

35 U.S.C. § 102

Claim 14 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Widman. Widman discloses flat strips of material 29 and 35 that are welded to seat frame members 28 and 23, respectively. These strips have fingers 31 and 36 for securing the ends of the spring strips 33. Figures 4 and 6 of Widman show how these anchoring strips 29 and 35 are welded flat against the frame members 28 and 23 so that when the fingers 31 and 36 are bent over the ends 32 of the spring strips 33, the ends of the spring strips are secured against the frame members 28 and 23. Since the spring strips 33 are arched and are therefore compressed when loaded, the spring strip ends 32 exert an outward force against the frame members 28 and 23. Thus the Widman design requires the use of at least two members to secure the spring end: the anchoring strip 29 or 35 having fingers 31 or 36, and the frame member 28 or 23. Notably, securing the ends of the spring strips against the frame members 31 and 36 also requires that the finger be bent over the spring strip after the end of the spring strip has been disposed between the finger and the frame member.

Independent Claim 14 of the present invention has been amended to recite the step of providing an elongate rail having an extending portion extending away from the securing portion at the seat base, forming tabs extending from the extending portion and bending the tabs to form hooks spaced along the elongate rail.

In contrast to the Widman reference, the present invention does not require a second member, such as a second frame member, for securing the spring end 19 in the

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slot 23 formed by the hook 16. Widman requires the use of two members, the frame member and anchoring strips with the fingers, to secure the ends of the springs. In fact, Widman teaches against the method of amended Claim 14 since the present invention could not adequately prevent the ends of the compressed spring strips of the Widman invention from sliding outward. In other words, the method of the present invention would not create a rail clip that could be used in Widman because the slots 23 formed by the hooks 16 of the present invention have nothing, apart from a press-fit design, to prevent the end of a compressed spring from sliding out of the slot.

Furthermore, in contrast to the Widman reference, the present invention makes it possible to bend the tabs into hooks 16 prior to assembly of the chair allowing an assembly worker to easily stretch the end 19 of a spring 18 over the hook 16 and into the slot 23 without any further bending of the tabs. Widman requires that the finger be bent over the spring strip after the end of the spring strip has been disposed between the finger and the frame member. The rejection of Claim 14 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) has therefore been overcome and is in condition for allowance.

35 U.S.C. § 103

Dependent Claims 15-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Widman and Claim 18 was rejected as being unpatentable over Widman in view of Bechtoldt. Since Widman teaches against the method of amended Claim 14, as described above, Widman does not make the method of Claim 14 obvious. Since independent Claim 14 is novel and nonobvious, dependent Claims 15-22 should also be allowable over the prior art.

Furthermore, as with Claim 14, Claims 15 and 16 are not obvious in view of Widman since using a rail having an angle cross-sectional shape would not work in the Widman invention. Using a rail having an angle cross-sectional shape in the Widman invention would move the fingers 31 and 36 away from the frame members 28 and 23 and prevent the secure anchoring of the arched spring strips 33. The use of rails having angled cross-sectional shapes also improves rigidity and may eliminate the need for additional frame members. The use of angled rails may even simplify manufacturing since the rails can be made of standard pieces of "angle iron," which are metal rails that

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have been cast, rolled, or bent to have L-shaped cross-sections. Accordingly, these additional considerations also make Claims 15 and 16 patentable over Widman.

35 U.S.C. § 112

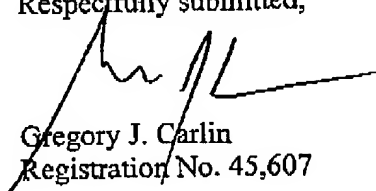
Dependent Claim 19 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Dependent Claim 19 has been amended to depend on Claim 18. Therefore, the rejection of Claim 19 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, has been overcome.

Conclusion

In view of the remarks and amendments presented above, it is respectfully submitted that Claims 14-22 of the present application are in condition for allowance. It is respectfully requested that a Notice of Allowance be issued in due course. The Examiner is requested to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney to resolve any remaining issues in order to expedite examination of the present application.

It is not believed that extensions of time or fees for net addition of claims are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such extensions are hereby petitioned under 37 CFR § 1.136(a), and any fee required therefore (including fees for net addition of claims) is hereby authorized to be charged to Deposit Account No. 16-0605.

Respectfully submitted,


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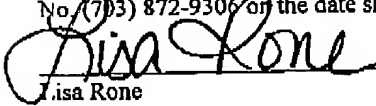
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